

ABSTRACT

A medical consultation support system in which a client computer, such as a personal computer or a terminal of an existing medical support system, is employed to transfer a structured request for consultation from a primary care physician to a supervisory host computer. The structured request may be accompanied by additional information related to the request, such as existing data files containing patient history information, medical image data, laboratory results, pathologies, etc., forming a transmittable, machine-readable collection of information relating to the consultation request. At the supervisory computer, the request is displayed for preliminary review by a receiving staff physician who designates a specialist and retrieves and assembles selected tutorial and background information, including related published articles, tutorial background lessons, practice and protocol documentation, and records of prior consultations which are related to the current consultation request, all of which are stored in one or more databases of medical information accessible to the supervisory host computer. The supervisory computer then transmits the request for consultation, together with at least the identification of the assembled supporting documentation, to the selected specialist for review, and thereafter receives the responsive comment from the selected specialist. The supervisory computer further stores the request for consultation, including the specialist's responsive comment and an identification of the cited supporting material, as a structured case history item in the database of medical information where it may be accessed for future reference. Each consultation is further stored as a recorded learning event associated with the requesting primary care physician, and used to generate a report of continuing legal education credits earned by the requesting physician while participating in the managed consultation sessions.